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## THE HOLY QUR-ÁN

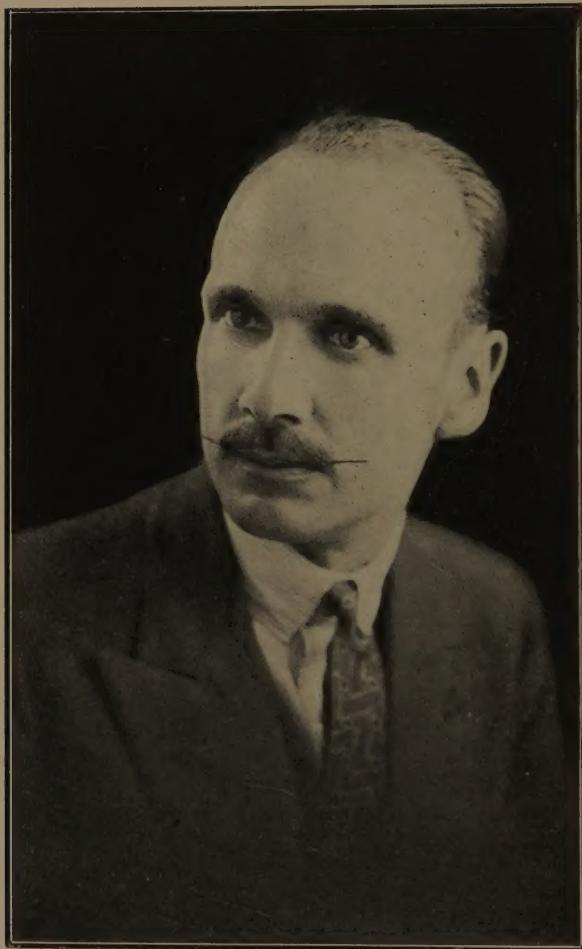
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MR. WALTER H. WILLIAMS.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
نَصْرَلِي عَلَىٰ رُوْلَةِ الْجَحْمِ  
شَهْدَهُ وَلِي

THE  
**ISLAMIC REVIEW**

SHABĀN, 1352 A.H.

NOVEMBER, 1933 A.C.

No. 11.

**WHY I ACCEPTED ISLAM**

BY WALKER H. WILLIAMS

I will endeavour in this short article to outline briefly the circumstances which led to my finally embracing Islam, trusting that same may prove of some interest both to my Muslim and non-Muslim readers.

I was brought up from early childhood in an atmosphere of religion, as it was intended that I should ultimately enter the priesthood, but God willed it otherwise, and instead I entered my present profession; therefore, at least, I cannot be accused of taking my consequent step without full knowledge of the facts.

My work and studies having created fresh interests in my life, I naturally found less time at my disposal to devote to religion than hitherto, and, consequently, as time passed, finding myself free of the religious influences of my younger days, I began to reason for myself, and eventually I found that I was questioning even the most

fundamental principles of a religion which I had until then accepted verbatim ; but nevertheless I still continued to fulfil my obligations to God.

About this time came the Great War, and I was drafted with my Regiment on service to the Near East. During this period (some four years) I had the extreme good fortune to make several good friends in Cairo, and it was the result of discussions I had with these good people, who explained to me certain passages of the Holy Qur-án, that sowed the seeds in my mind of the doctrines of a religion which I was destined some years later to adopt.

Upon resuming my civil occupation there followed a period in my life in which, owing to the renewal of my studies and my work, I found little time to devote to the serious study of religious matters ; and when I ultimately did, I found that I was no longer able to reconcile myself to the teachings of the Christian Faith, and, as a result, I discontinued my attendance at Church, as I was convinced that any other course under the circumstances was hypocritical.

It was some time later that I recalled to mind the earlier discussions that I had with my old Egyptian friends, so, in the hope of gaining enlightenment, I devoted a considerable amount of my spare time to a thorough study of an English translation of the Holy Qur-án, and as I read over and over again certain of the words of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him !) I could not help but see that here at last in Islam I had found the true faith for which I had been seeking so long. And the knowledge gave me a totally different outlook on life, as if, after groping endlessly about dark and obscure byways, I had at last come upon a bright and illuminated thoroughfare.

It was not long after this that I visited the Mosque at Woking and consulted Maulvi Abdul Majid, to whom

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I would like to record my appreciation of his kind advice and assistance, and thereupon joined the Holy Brotherhood of Islam, "All praise to Allah!" And from that day, needless to say, I have felt a different being, having a purpose in life.

I will not attempt to discuss here the fundamental principles of Islam which I am content to leave in more able hands. There is a point, however, which to my mind deserves mention, as one who has closely followed the religious observances of both Muslims and Christians. That whilst an average Christian having attended Church Service on a Sunday, which is invariably carried through by a Clergyman and in which the worshipper often takes a rather inactive part, he or she considers their obligation to God fulfilled until the following Sunday. Whereas by comparison the Muslim prays regularly each day individually, either in a Mosque or in the privacy of his home, and even when Friday prayers are said in congregation this individuality is still retained, each Muslim praying independently to Allah without the need of any intermediary or elaborate ritual.

I would like to say that I feel confident, that if only people in this and other Western countries can be brought to appreciate the full meaning of Islam, and what it stands for, the ranks of Islam will be daily swelled, only unfortunately there is a vast amount of misapprehension in the minds of many Free Thinkers and others who still cling to their old creed simply because they require the moral courage to abandon a faith, with the principles of which they are at variance, and to embrace Islam.

Not one of the least of these is the idea that Islam is peculiar to the Oriental races and not adapted for everyday life in Western countries. This is of course a wrong notion, but it nevertheless exists in the minds of the majority and requires contradiction in a practical form,

and that is to publish for the benefit of the uninitiated the fact that numbers like myself have joined and are still joining the ranks of Islam and thus give added confidence to our potential brethren of to-morrow.

This and other facts require publication through other mediums than this organ, if we are to effectively spread the words of the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

Therefore Brothers and Sisters in Islam, we must awake from that sense of security into which we have allowed ourselves to relapse, come out into the open and bear the torch of Islam among the unenlightened throughout the world, and what better place to concentrate our first efforts than here in London, the heart of the British Empire, from whence the faith of Islam will spread throughout the West.

It is therefore essential, to my mind, for this reason alone, if no other, that a building, worthy of Islam, should be acquired and maintained in Central London, where all Muslims could meet and, what is more, by publicity non-Muslims should be attracted in numbers to listen to worthy propounders of the Holy Faith and also see the Faithful at prayer, thus giving confidence to those who have a wrong conception of Muslim prayers.

Without such an effort as this, numbers will be lost to Islam, as how otherwise are we to get in touch with those who are wavering in their beliefs and are awaiting enlightenment. For surely I am only one example of hundreds of thousands.

What is more the prestige of Islam is to be borne in mind. The capital of the British Empire and the centre of the world without an edifice worthy of Islam, unbelievable !

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**WITH DIFFICULTY IS EASE**

BY THE LATE KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

Have We not expanded for you your breast and taken off from you your burden, which pressed heavily upon your back, and exalted your mention for you ? So surely with difficulty is ease, with difficulty surely is ease : so when you are free, strive hard, and make your Lord your exclusive object.—*The Holy Qur-án*, 94 : 1—8.

Calamities are sent us only to form our character. If man were not to accept this theory of life, what other alternative is left than that of killing himself by dashing his head against a stone wall ? Happiness and misery are related to each other like light and shade, and until we reach that stage of mental culture in which we are neither the slaves of passions, nor cowards in the face of trials, we shall never do any work worthy of the name. Had it been possible for us to go through the world without encountering any difficulties, we could have had some grounds for taking a different view ; but as it is, whatever may be our attitude towards religion in general, this is the only possible view. We must, after all, look at facts as they are, and it will be seen that happiness and misery are simultaneously attached to our life. This being so, it follows that only that man can dwell in this world with a peaceful mind who takes it as a matter of fact that wherever there is pleasure, there is pain also. It is this truth that is indicated by the verse :

So surely with difficulty is ease, with difficulty surely is ease.

In other words, if we long for the shifting of the back-breaking burden from our shoulders and that we be raised high in the estimation of the people,—this latter in its turn necessitates a greater largeness of heart and a wider sympathy—then the first step must be that we have a practical realization of the fact that convenience and inconvenience are complementary to each other in our life and

that they are, indeed, sent for our good. It is to emphasise the logical force of this truth that the word *fa*, meaning *so then*, has been used in the beginning of the verse under discussion—the idea being that if you seek for the facilities mentioned in the foregoing verses, then the way to them lies through your realizing the fact that facility and difficulty are inevitably linked together. Of course, a remedy was suggested for this seemingly paradoxical position by ancient Indian philosophy,—and that remedy was made a part of the religious system then in vogue—an exhortation to Man that he should renounce the world and live the life of a recluse in the woods and solitary places. It is said that such was the teaching of the great sage Buddha also to whom is ascribed the dictum that to escape the all-encompassing miseries of this world one should annihilate his own self; whereas we know from our own experience that side by side with these same miseries there is also a correspondingly great provision for our comfort and welfare in this mortal life. The Brahmins and the Buddhists have propounded this theory of life, calling it *Tyag* or *Renunciation* and *Nirvana* or *Self-annihilation*, and have offered it to the world as the greatest blessing, and the only way to true salvation.

But the question remains whether any person has ever put this theory of life actually into practice. The Buddhists founded great empires for themselves. The empire of Asoka and the rule of his descendants after him, all go to show that the theory of *Nirvana* was used merely as a religious theory to which the lie was unblushingly given by the actions of its followers.

Brahminism also laid too great an emphasis on renunciation ; but have its followers acted on its teachings ? Our Hindu friends are no whit behind other religious communities in their desire for wealth and things worldly. For centuries they have been wholly absorbed

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in the thought of amassing riches, and it will, therefore, seem to be evident that, in practice, they have turned a deaf ear to the teachings of their ancestors in the matter of renunciation. Now, it is interesting to find that men of this kind—and it makes no difference whether they be Hindus or Muslims—show an utter lack of courage when faced with any kind of calamity. They are staggered, in the literal sense of the word, and behave like children.

The right course, therefore, is not that we should desist from acquiring the things of this world, but that we should never forget that for the practical purposes of our daily existence ease and pain are inseparable experiences of life. If, on the one hand, the Hindu sages, in the records which they have left, laid special emphasis on renunciation and self-annihilation—and the religion preached by the Church also exhorted action on the same principles for several centuries since its foundation,—the present civilization of the West, on the other hand, has established the hoarding of treasure as the sole aim and object of human endeavour. These modern Christians became so greedy for gain that its pursuit took the place of their religious duties. The passion of avarice with which they have tortured and exploited the less powerful nations of the world beggars all description. This was evidently the natural reaction to the unnatural teaching of early Christianity regarding the attitude of Man towards the things of the world.

But there is a very interesting thing about these slaves of the world. When brought face to face with any calamity, as I have already remarked, they show themselves to be cowards. Often they attempt or commit suicide—a cowardly exit from life, which has of late been adopted in Europe and America with a frequency never witnessed in the East.

To make a long story short, the condition of worldly life is such that there is no safety in it either way, whether

we renounce the world or become its slave. Assuming that we have to pull on with the world we are confronted with the fact that the provision made for our life is not one of unmixed comfort. Comfort is invariably linked up with a corresponding distress. It is true that we have to struggle for that comfort ; and at times such struggles are very keen and painful in themselves. But apart from the pain and anxiety of these struggles there are cases of additional suffering arising from loss of what we have earned, or injury done to what we possess,—and such cases are of not infrequent occurrence. For these we have to find some remedy.

Such a remedy has been prescribed by the Holy Qur-án alone, and it consists in making ourselves feel that whatever we earn or acquire is not for our personal use alone, but for others as well, and that our position in relation to such earnings or acquisitions is closely analogous to that of a trustee. The law may or may not entitle others to share in our earnings. That is not the point. The point is that it is our duty to look at the question from the point of view of charity and moral obligation, and regard them as co-sharers with us in all that belongs to us. It goes almost without saying that, in a general way, whatsoever we do is done for our own pleasure. So if we can form the habit of finding pleasure in the giving of a part of our earnings to others, and make our sense of satisfaction dependent on the degree of generosity and munificence which we display—and it is no more difficult to form than are other habits—then, in the event of the ups and downs of life depriving us of our worldly wealth, the misery involved will not be too great for us to bear. In a matter like this we should only try to develop in ourselves the Attribute of the Creator of the Universe in His capacity of *Rab*—a capacity in which He nourishes the whole world and gives bountifully to everyone therein.

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To sum up, in order to acquire the peace of mind, which is needed by all, we have first of all to comprehend the fundamental truth that pleasure and pain are like light and shade ; and that we should be independent of the fascination of the one as well as of the menace of the other. Having taken our stand on this truth our next step should be to labour day and night to earn and dedicate the things earned to the Maintainer of the world ; or, in other words, to spend them on His creatures. It is this ordinance which is contained in the verses :—

So surely with difficulty is ease, with difficulty surely is ease : so when you are free, strive hard, and make your Lord (*Rab*) your exclusive object.

Which may be paraphrased—Bear in mind that difficulty is a necessary adjunct to ease and comfort ; when you realize this, and are free from the confusion caused by this problem, put forth your labour and apply your energy to the full ; and finally make yourself the servant of your Lord (*Rab*), that is, spend your earnings for the benefit of His creatures in the same way as He is ministering to the needs of you and them. What service can a man who has no money render to others ? One who retires to the woods and hills and turns a hermit becomes a burden upon others because he stands in need of their giving him of their earnings in the way of charity ! If you wish to become exalted in the eyes of people far and near, and thus see the fulfilment of the verse—"And exalted your mention for you" in your own life, keep your hands ever open in generosity ; but this will be impossible for you so long as you do not earn money with infinite pains and hard struggles (strive hard). The Holy Qur-án, by saying : "(Have we not) exalted your mention for you and taken off your burden, which pressed heavily upon your back" only exposes the truth that no calamity can make its burden felt upon a person who leaves no room in his mind for any sense of loss as such. Losses and their

species—as enumerated in the Holy Qur-án—are destruction of wealth or other property, and like misfortunes of a material kind. Says the Qur-án :—

And We will most certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits ; but give good news to the patient, who, when a misfortune befalls them, say : ‘ Surely we are Allah’s ; and unto Him we shall surely return.’<sup>1</sup>

Now, when we of our own free will give away the fruits of our earnings to others, and leave thereof nothing for ourselves what difference does it make whether any part of it remains with us or is taken away from us by the revolution of time, or the changes and chances of life ?

Perhaps someone will remark that these are but words of consolation. To such an one I will say—let him see for himself if it is or is not the real position. We are, doubtless, all of us, desirous of comfort and ease, and we cannot, in any circumstances, escape loss and sorrow ? And since this is so, does the remedy lie in the course followed by the hermits of Hinduism, or even in that adopted by the Mammon-worshippers of the West ? It is evident that in either of these incidents untoward and unexpected have to be faced. Real comfort, I repeat, can come only to him who earns with the utmost effort and gladly shares the fruits of his earnings with others. This is the only way in which a man can be free from the griefs and sorrows of life. Moreover, such a course, manifesting as it does the benevolence of his heart, will make his name renowned and of good report among men.

One thing more I would say in this connection. God revealed the words “ And exalted your mention for you ” to the Holy Prophet at a time when he was living the life of a recluse. But what an astounding prophecy was contained in those few words ! The honour and importance which the Holy Prophet—a fugitive from his people—attained on the day of his victorious entry in Mecca, was only the beginning of that ever-widening

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sphere of fame that was destined to be his, and the promise of this was contained in this short verse. By the will of God that Divine promise has been ever revealing new significance with the passage of time, and will continue so to do in the time to come.

Not a century since the Prophet's death has passed but has witnessed his fame manifested in a form more glorious than ever before. Of course we had to experience a time when the enemies of the Prophet considered it their religious duty to abhor and vilify his name. But slowly, and by degrees, circumstances have taken a different turn, and at the present time it is difficult to say if any aspect of civilization—political, moral, cultural, economic or social—is uninfluenced by the teachings of the Prophet of Arabia. Let anyone, who will, examine the highest principles of culture, see if the ablest and most illuminative exponent of these has not been that illiterate prophet of Arabia, who was told, when still living in obscurity, that his name would be made famous. Our own age is the most suitable of all for witnessing a manifestation of the glory of this Divine prophecy. In this age the people of the world are sick of religion in general. And to be quite candid, the things which people understand by the word "Religion" are such as ought, in the best interests of humanity, to be renounced. The world is now determined on new achievements and continuous progress in the various departments of life, and it requires a religion the principles of which will produce this desired success and progress.

Corresponding to this world-demand, the advent of Islam was destined to give a lead to humanity in its path of progress. The very purpose of the revelation of the Qur-án was the advancement of humanity. In the words of the book :

These are on a right path from thier Lord, and these it is that shall be *successful.* (2 : 5.)

And if we examine the methods adopted by the world of civilization and culture, we shall find that they are the same as those enunciated in the Holy Qur-án. But this fact is as yet unknown to many. It is our duty to make it known. I have attempted to do my part in my book, *Islam and Civilization*. When we have duly discharged this urgent duty of ours, the Western world is sure to sing the praises of the unlettered Prophet of Arabia and demonstrate anew the truth of the verse—"And exalted for you your mention."

Let us also turn our eyes to India as well. Here our Hindu compatriots have grown sick of their religion of the *Shastras*, and are gradually adopting the principles of Islam in their practical life. It is most desirable that our Muslim preachers should act intelligently and tactfully at a time like this, and take hint from the psychological changes at work there. Only by so doing can they see the exaltation of their Prophet's name in India as well as in the rest of the world.

I have a few words to say here which owe their origin to inspiration. It comes to me that the prophecy—"and exalted for you your mention"—has been fulfilled in another and a most marvellous way. Is it not a fact that the Muslim call for prayer is now heard in all the countries of the world, not excepting those of Europe and America, five times a day? The Muezzin ascends to the top of the Minaret and thence proclaims at the top of his voice, with other words, the phrase: *I bear witness that surely Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah*. Is not this the most dignified way in which a person's name can be exalted? Is not this a literal fulfilment of the Divine promise? But there is another custom in Muslim countries which all the more enhances the glory of the Prophet's name, owing to the frequency of its observance. The custom is that when the name of the Prophet is mentioned, a Muslim

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invariably repeats the following, what is in Muslim parlance called the *Darud*, that is, a prayer of blessing for him :

O Allah ! Exalt Muhammnad and the followers of Muhammad as Thou didst exalt Abraham and the followers of Abraham, for surely Thou art Praised and Magnified.

O Allah ! Bless Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad as Thou didst bless Abraham and the followers of Abraham, for surely Thou art Praised and Magnified.

In this way several millions of times a day the Prophet's name is exalted in glory as a matter of course. Does any man in the world possess a like blessedness of memory ? How subtle are the ways of the Lord in fulfilling His promises to His true servants !

O Allah ! Bless Muhammad and his followers.

*Amen.*

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## THE PROPHET OF UNITY

BY SYED SULAIMAN NADVI

(Continued from Vol. XXI, page 343.)

*The Unity of Humanity.*—There are two things which, in connection with the perfection of God's unity, may be recognized as the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. The idea of unity starts from the actual greatness of God and ends with the position of man. The polytheist and the idolater, the star-worshipper and the naturalist, in adoring the idols and fetishes, by paying their homage to animals and demons and by deifying the heavenly bodies and even mankind abundantly prove that they have not recognized the true position and the true worth of man. In fact they actually assign to mankind a lower place than that given to the stones, the trees, the animals, the rivers, the mountains, the moon, and the stars. They think that the sun and the moon are not made for man, but that man has been created

for the sun and the moon. Fire and water—all the manifestations of nature from the sun downwards—they are content to take as their masters for the service of whom they have been created. The sovereignty of such gods as these had divided the human brotherhood into a variety of classes, high and low, of noble and of humble birth. Some had been created from the head of the *Permehwar*, others from his hands, and yet others from his feet. There was no trace of human equality. Mankind had become irretrievably split up, and any prospect of reunion seemed both remote and fantastic. The powerful and haughty sovereigns of Babylon, of Egypt, India and Persia had raised themselves so much above their fellow-men that their accession to power and removal therefrom seemed to be controllable not by human agency, but by the gods and the angels.

*A Declaration of Man's Position.*—But it was the teaching of the Holy Prophet which banished all fears, except the fear of God, from the hearts of men. The doctrine of God's unity levelled the high and the low, abolished distinctions of nationality and caste, and did away with all differences of wealth and poverty, colour and race. The rule of pride and vanity, oppression and violence, came to an end, and all men were recognized as the slaves of God and, therefore, as equal in His eyes. All were acknowledged as brethren among themselves, and as having equal rights one with the other.

The Holy Prophet has told us that night and day, the sun, the moon, the stars, the rivers, fire, trees, in short, all things in the universe are made for man and are ever active in his service. Who then can be more ignorant than he who makes any one of these creatures the object of his worship ?

He taught the world, by means of divine revelation, that man is the noblest of all creatures in the universe,

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that he has been sent to perform the duties of God's vicegerent, and that he has been crowned with the dignity of the deputy of God. Among the millions of God's creatures it is he who has been charged with the trust of God, an office that was not bestowed either on the angels or the heavens, the earth or the mountains. The Holy Qur-án says that man has been blessed with reverence and greatness, that he is the noblest of all creatures, and that he has been honoured with the gifts of God. He has the power to rule over land and sea ; he eats clean food, his stature and presence are of the noblest ; and he has come into the world as the vicegerent of God. Whom, therefore, can man worship in the universe except God ?

Thus the teaching of the Holy Prophet has freed man from every other bondage, and has limited his homage exclusively to the One God. It has made the whole world subject to the service of man for whom it has been created. What creature is there, then, on the surface of the earth that can be the subject of his worship ?

The noble ideal of self-respect, the grand conception of the truth, and the strong sense of duty up to which the world has progressed—these, too, have their source and inspiration in the Qur-anic teaching, which revealed to man his true position and made him realize his own self. They taught him how to perform his duties ; they united individuals and nations, and established them all on the same level. It was only these teachings which made the men who grazed goats and camels to be governors of the world, and enabled the Beduins who played with particles of sand to compete for the riches of the world and for the crowns and thrones of kings. Men who knew no bed but the sandy sheet of the desert, spread their couches in the palaces of the Cæsars, and the owners of a few oases became the masters of the whole world.

*Repudiation of every kind of division.*—Men had, by their pride, divided a united humanity into a hundred

classifications. Kings were deified and worshipped as gods, and their orders had the force of the Commandments of God. Nimrod of Babel and Pharaoh of Egypt had proclaimed themselves to be the most high gods of their nations, but it was the voice of Muhammad which summoned them down from their exalted thrones and placed them on the same level with the rest of mankind. The Holy Prophet even disapproved of according to any one, except God, the title of King or Emperor (*Bukhari*).

Similarly while men of other religions had deified their apostles, saints and martyrs, the Holy Prophet placed every one of them in different ranks of God's service, and pronounced them all to be alike God's servants and slaves.

The nations, too, had classified themselves into different ranks and degrees. The Israelites conceived themselves to be the family of God. Among the Hindus the Brahmins were held to be created from the head, the Rajputs from the arms and the Shudras from the feet of God. Similarly in the Roman Empire, the Romans were deemed to be born for sovereignty, while those who were not Romans were condemned to slavery and servitude. Thus, there stood between the nations the separating walls of superiority and inferiority, honourableness and meanness, holiness and unholiness, that had divided a single humanity into hundreds of humanities. It was the voice of the Holy Prophet Muhammed only which first addressed those who claimed to be above their fellow men and said: " You, too, are men, among the creatures of God," and, demolishing all those dividing walls at a single stroke, placed all mankind on the common level of humanity.

O Mankind ! verily We have created you male and female and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the best in conduct.

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All distinctions of nationality, family and birth were totally abolished, and the superior claims of the Brahmins, the Jews and the Christian Popes were as completely extinguished as the title to godhood of the Nimrods and the Pharaohs.

The birth and dispersal of all nations from a single first man—Adam—was considered, before Islam, by the Jews and the Christians only as a doctrine in the theory of creation. The Holy Prophet made it the corner stone of his moral teachings and built on it the grand structure of the unity of humanity which, God willing, shall never fall again. He declared before the largest assemblage of the proud Arabs : “God has put an end to the pride of the days of ignorance, and your boast in your paternity. You are all the sons of a single Adam who was made of clay.”

The superior and conflicting claims of the Arabs over the Persians, and of the Persians over the Arabs, the rights of nobility asserted by the white people against the black, and by the black against the white, were now done away with, and it was declared that “the Arabs and the Persians have no superiority over each other, nor the white over the black.”

In short, it was his teaching which united all mankind. Arabs and Persians, Europeans and Africans, Hindus and Chinese, all now stood on the same level of a common brotherhood, and all were considered as brothers, acknowledging the unity of God and the apostleship of the prophets. Except piety, all distinctions of birth and convention were abolished and the world was taught “Do not envy, nor entertain any malicious feeling against one another, and be slaves of God as brothers to one another.”

*The Unity of the Religious and Secular Life.*—One of the great misunderstandings from which men suffered

was the belief that religion and the world were not concerned with each other, but moved in spheres apart. It was held that he who adopted a religious life kept himself aloof from the world, while he who chose the world and the charms of the world, relaxed, by doing so, his hold on religion. Although this belief had assumed a practical shape in Persia, India, China and other Eastern countries, and had constituted a dividing wall between the spheres of activities of the hermit and the king, making their unity and co-operation almost impossible, but it was the people who considered themselves the followers of revealed books and the first to be addressed by the prophets of God, who claim particular attention in this matter. From the Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian and Zoroastrian points of view the belief deemed most worthy of consideration was that which divided mankind into those who were reserved for the service of religion and those who were of the world worldly. Among the Hindus the Brahmins were held to be born naturally for a religious life, the Rajputs for sovereignty, the Vaish for commerce and agriculture, and the Shudras for labour and menial service. Their lives had also been divided into different periods. Thus thirty years were reserved for education, thirty for earning their living in the world, and thirty for prayer and worship. Among the Buddhists the Bhikshus were set apart as a distinct class whose business it was only to spend their lives in religious practices. Similarly the men of the world formed a separate class. It was they who managed the affairs of the world and whose duty was to provide for all the expenses of the Bhikshus.

Among the Jews the "Levites" were the sooth-sayers of religion. They had been kept apart from the affairs of the world. They were excluded even from family inheritance as being concerned with worldly goods. The

## THE PROPHET OF UNITY

rest were men of the world. The Christians had carried this division to a greater length. They had set up two distinct sovereigns, God and Cæsar, and had been instructed to give to God what was God's and to Cæsar what was Cæsar's.

The practical result of this wrong notion, according to which the Jews and the Christians tried to mould their lives, became manifest in two ways, the Jews considered this world to be the net result of their life here and hereafter, while the Christians regarded the next world as the aim and object of their present existence. The principle which governed the empire of the Jews and pervaded their business conduct was simply that this world was the end of man's life and activities. Hence they disregarded religion and confined their attention solely to worldly things, considering the gifts of this world to be the reward of every good deed. It was owing to this belief that a large sect among them believed only in the gifts of this world and absolutely disbelieved in the rewards of the next or in any resurrection. On the other hand, the early Christians rejected the things of this world and looked for every blessing in the kingdom of Heaven, adopting for this end a monkish and ascetic life.

*The Teaching of Islam.*—But Islam, as revealed through the Holy Prophet, removed this old misconception of the world and taught that the two are really one and the same thing—that worldly life is religion and religion is worldly life, that is, as it ought to be lived. Religion when influenced by passion becomes a thing of this world, and a worldly life becomes religious when it is governed by the laws of God. Thus the thing which divides the two is man's own point of view. If that point of view is correct, the dividing line disappears and the two become one. Dominion and sovereignty, which are regarded as concerns of the world, assume a religious character when

administered in accordance with the Will of God. To accumulate riches is a worldly business, but when the accumulation is made with a view to serve mankind it becomes a thing of religion. To lay down one's life is a worldly affair, but it becomes religious when it takes the form of martyrdom, and is done in obedience to the Commands of God.

The Holy Prophet taught us this truth in a practical way. His prayers and fasts, *Hajj* and *Zakat*, his vigils and nocturnal devotions, the recitation of the Qur-án and the preaching of laws, his religious wars and his devotion to the affairs of the State, in short, each and every act of his life was as much connected with the world as it was associated with religion. At the same time that he was looked upon as another Alexander or Cæsar he appeared as an Apostle of God and a Heavenly Messenger. After the Holy Prophet, his Caliphs and his Companions (May God's peace be on them all) also illustrated this point, and all the glorious deeds of their lives revealed the same spirit—that engendered by the amalgamation of the religious with the secular life—wholly in accordance with the aim of the Qur-án. The Holy Qur-án has, in several passages, prescribed the reward of man's actions to be given both in this world and in the next, that is to say, it has ordained that man shall have the reward of his good or evil deeds in this world as well as in the next. The Muslims had this point before them long after the Companions, and so long as they continued to realize it all their deeds were near perfection, and their worldly and religious life one and the same.

To-day the Islamic nations are the victims either of the Jewish belief or of the Christian. To-day the pulpit and the throne are held to be two different things and the commander of armies and the leader (*Imam*) of the prayer are deemed to belong to two

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different groups of men, while the fact is that our pulpit and our throne were one and the same thing, and it was the commander of our armies who led our prayers.

*Come to Islam.*—The Muslims have over long forgotten this teaching of the Holy Prophet. They, too, have prescribed limits for religion and for the world, and have become subjects of two sovereigns, God and Cæsar. They consider dominion and sovereignty, commerce and service, the acquisition of wealth and the study of the arts as affairs of the world, while they regard prayers and fasting and the telling of beads only as works of religion : although, in fact, if the purpose be righteous, every worldly struggle, every political effort, every educational service, every commercial enterprise and step in industrial progress and every invention becomes wholly religious; but if the purpose be not righteous then even a whole night of prayer and a whole day of fasting are alike worldly and worthless.

The distinction, if any, between religious and worldly matters in the religion brought by Muhammed consists, not in any difference of deed but in the spirit of these deeds. This is the secret which explains why Islam, when it came as a religion, came also as the herald of dominion and sovereignty. In the Buddhist creed religion and worldly dominion are separate. The Israelites were granted sovereignty four hundred years after the Jewish religion was revealed. Christianity was able to ascend the throne even some centuries after Christ. But when the Holy Prophet set up the pulpit of his religion at Medina, the throne of worldly dominion was also set up there, and at the same time great moral and spiritual, commercial and political, literary and educational seats of activity, in short, all the branches of civilization were established at their assigned places. Within thirty years a new world of religion and morality, learning and virtuous

living, justice and equity, fraternity and equality, culture and civilization had been created, which spread from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean. The united nationhood of the Muslims and the people of the Book presented an example of human brotherhood which has no parallel in the history of the world, and Arabia, Persia, Turkey, China, India and Byzantium, Berber and Abyssinia jointly laid the foundation under the standard of unity set forth in the words : " There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Apostle," a common fraternity of which we find no equal even in the present era of civilization and progress.

The foremost cause of this rapid and great revolution was that Islam had abolished the dividing line between the religious and the worldly life, and did not consider a life of solitude and asceticism equivalent to worship. On the other hand, the conquest of kingdom, the foundation of educational institutions, commercial journeys by land or sea, warlike enterprises, attempts to establish peace, legitimate endeavours to earn a living or acquire wealth, efforts to help the poor, the helpless and travellers, kindness towards children and the family and individual efforts to serve the cause of God, all these are religious actions according to the creed of Muhammad. Hence every activity and struggle in the life of a Muslim which is directed to win the favour of God amounted to an act of religion.

The true cause which brought about the fall of the Muslims in the past was simply that they had forgotten this essential point of the oneness of the world and religion. The sovereign was entrusted with temporal matters, while the Shaikh-ul-Islam became responsible for the affairs of religion and, like the Christians, they began to make a distinction between the worldly and the religious life, between Cæsar and God. A list of religious matters

## **PRECIOUS GEMS**

was prepared as distinct from those which were classified as temporal. Some retired to monasteries, mosques and hermit cells and called themselves the servants of God, while others entered into the struggles of a worldly life and became people of the world. The result was that those who claimed to be religious were no longer able to engage in the business of the world, lost the business instinct, while those who were openly people of the world lost the fear of God and were deprived of the wealth of His favour.

Now it is the duty of the followers of Muhammad (May God's peace be upon him) to realize this secret of the unity of religion and the world, and to seek the means of salvation in this unity. In the cause of God they must earn money in the markets of the world, sacrifice their lives in battle, acquire useful arts and sciences in schools and Universities and effect inventions in the laboratories. They must earn the riches of this world as well as the rewards of the next, and consider the dominion of the earth and the kingdom of heaven as dependent the one on the other.

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## **PRECIOUS GEMS.**

The calamity of knowledge is forgetfulness ; and to lose knowledge is this : to speak of it to the unworthy.



The learned are those who practise what they know.



The knowledge from which no benefit is derived is like a treasure from which no charity is bestowed in the way of the Lord.

**MUHAMMAD.**

# THE HOLY QUR-ÁN AND ITS INTRODUCTION

BY THE LATE KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

*(Continued from Vol. XXI, page 323.)*

## SECTION 9.

To complete the list of their misdeeds, the Holy Qur-án speaks here of a murder which they committed either in the days of Moses, or shortly afterwards. But the event, by reason of the remarkable circumstances attending it, was well within the memory of the Jews. We need not particularize either the date of the crime or the personality of the deceased. They do not assist the object for which the story has been told. First, the event has been mentioned to show that there remained nothing in the Law that was not violated by the Jews, including the ordinances against the capital offence. Secondly, the Holy Book intended to teach us another great lesson. The Book now and then refers to certain events in history that smack of the miraculous, but explains their nature in such a way as to show us how their performance may come within our own reach. They are only extraordinary feats, miracles of knowledge. Man possesses wonderful capacities, which were taken for miracles in the days of ignorance, but they are explainable things now. I do not say, as I remarked before, that the Almighty Lord has not power to grant us an ability to work wonders. He placed certain high faculties in us. He would not teach us things that were of no use to us in this life, but He would explain to us the nature of what used to pass as impossible. I have referred to this when mentioning the getting of water by the removal of a rock by Moses<sup>1</sup> and his crossing the Red Sea.<sup>2</sup> We also read some of the marvellous things in the glory of Solomon. There again the Book speaks of human capabilities of the highest order, yet within the reach of men of advanced culture.

<sup>1</sup> Verse 60.

<sup>2</sup> Verse 50.

## INTRODUCTION TO HOLY QUR-ÁN

In verse 72, reference has been made to a murder where the culprit was generally unknown, except to a few. Some of his friends wanted to conceal him, others, to give him up to justice. The matter was referred to the then prophet among the Jews, whether Moses or another, matters not. God intended to bring the conspiracy to light, and He ordered the prophet either to touch the corpse of the dead or to strike it with pieces of the flesh of the cow, with the suspected murderer standing by. Some sort of movement was observed in the corpse, and the murderer was discovered.

This has been variously explained. Some of the theories being too ridiculous to repeat here. Others have corroborated the episode in a way unwarranted by the text, but there is a third explanation that seems to me reasonable ; besides serving the purpose for which such events are narrated in the Qur-án.

Man has rightly been described by Muslim Divines as the universe in miniature. This is, to-day, a scientific verity. Everything in Nature finds representation in our system, it may be used with great advantage by skilful people. Here, I speak of one important thing, *i.e.*, electricity. Electrons pervade man's body in every form, as they do the universe. Electricity is doing wonders in our own days, which could be done by us if we could make use of the electricity existing in us. This may be accomplished by those well versed in occultism, for, by cultivating will-power in accordance with that science, we can collect all the electricity in our body and apply it to gain the object in view. An inanimate object like a block of wood can make any movement under the electric current when worked by an expert hand. A dead body will stand on its feet if it is subjected to the same current. We could do the same thing without using any galvanic battery, if we knew how to convert our electrons into a strong current and

apply it to the body of a dead person. What occurred on the occasion under discussion was, that the suspected person was asked to stand near the body of the murdered man. Then the body was touched by the prophet, or struck by pieces of the body of the cow killed on that occasion, according to the directions of the Jewish Law, while the prophet exercised his will power with a view to the body of the deceased making certain movements if the suspected person was the murderer. So it was a wonderful work, but done in accordance with certain human powers which the Holy words suggest that we, too, should cultivate. I do not think that the act performed by the prophet was that of a practised hand. The blessed do not cultivate such powers. They have enough to keep them fully occupied as teachers of humanity, but these powers come to them as a gift from God on the required occasion. They do it to meet an emergency, and also to teach us that we too possess like faculties and should develop them. But the possession of these powers is not without its dangers, for they may be used with evil motives. The Muslim Divines knew the art, but kept it secret. They taught it only to such pupils who would, they knew, exercise control over their low passions, so the secret science gradually became extinct. Now it has fallen into the hands of the hypnotist, who uses it as a trade, and not always a scrupulous one. This is a Muslim heritage, but they lost it, like other good things once in their possession. This episode has been mentioned to explain the phenomena of resurrection as referred to in verse 73. It is after all, the working of the human mind which can make a dead body move. It is only a figment of the Supreme Mind, and the event may give us an insight into the working of the Lord, Whose mind can restore the whole world of the dead, just as an advanced soul did in a very humble way in the case of the murdered Israelite.

*(To be continued.)*

## CORRESPONDENCE

### CORRESPONDENCE

[The letter below comes from the pen of our friend Mr. Heinkel. We print it, because we feel that it may serve to draw the attention of born Muslims in foreign countries to their sorely neglected duty towards their Faith. The letter is even more worthy of our attention because it is a heart to heart talk of one Muslim with another—both new to the fold of Islam.—Ed., I. R.]

LOS ANGELES,  
CALIFORNIA.

DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER :

*Assalamo-Alaikum.*

The reply of Brother Glick was received much sooner than I had anticipated. The following is his entire reference to your letter, a copy of which I had forwarded to him : " In writing to Muslim Society of Great Britain, I would suggest you to enquire what they think of A. I. A. (American Islamic Association) endorsement of annual congress in Jeddah as practical means of accomplishing most under modern conditions. .... on a non-sectarian and non-political basis."

As for myself, I should like very much to learn more of your organization, its functions and methods of operation. I have worked very hard for the past year in hopes of arousing the interest of the local foreign born Muslim, but in most instances I was informed by him that he was in America to make money, and that he was not interested in furthering the cause of Islam. It is very pitiful when I think of the thousands of Muslims in America and not a single Mosque, and just a few weak, scattered missions. In Los Angeles and its vicinity there are a few hundred Muslims but not a mission. Why ? That is the question which constantly occurs to me—also, why is it impossible to obtain moral help and advice from leaders of various Muslim groups. I have from time to time written to a number of them, but failed to receive a reply. Some time ago Shaukat Ali was in the city. I attempted to get in touch with him, but was ignored. Isn't the American convert to Islam wanted ? The fact that I am, and always have been, interested in religion is not an indication that I am a religious fanatic to be shunned. I do not expect nor want any monetary gain from my affiliation with the Islamic faith, in fact, I have expended considerable time and money in the furtherance of the faith. I have absolutely stopped considerable adverse and erroneous criticisms in the press and periodicals. Being a writer, and making my living that way, you can well understand that the latter action has not assisted me in my literary work. Yet, that has not deterred me from spreading the light of Islam. However, I would like to know whence some of these leaders of foreign Muslim groups derive that feeling of superiority, if

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the American isn't wanted as a convert to Islam, I certainly would like to know that, too. Every letter as well as every greeting demands a reply. That is not only common courtesy, but is so commanded in the Holy Qur-án : " When ye are saluted with a salutation, salute the person with a better salutation, or at least return the same ; for Allah taketh an account of all things."

In passing, I cannot praise too highly the actions and works of the group at the Mosque at Woking. Up to this time they are the only ones who have expressed a real desire to gain converts, and to assist these newly made converts in learning more of Islam. If there are any other groups who are as sincere, as kind, and as willing to help, as those at Woking, I have yet to learn of them.

I shall, with interest, await your reply.

May the blessings of Allah abide with you.

Your brother in Islam.

HARRY E. HEINKEL,

*Secretary, the American Islamic  
Association.*

THE EDITOR,  
*The Islamic Review,*

*The Mosque, Woking.*

RESPECTED SIR,

I have been studying your *Islamic Review* with great interest at the University Library, Ghent.

I admit that it has changed my views entirely about Islam and its Holy Prophet.

Some months back I used to think of Muhammad as a man who preached his religion through sword and advocated slavery, but thank God I have seen the truth now. I am now positive that the only way to the world peace lies in the true Religion of Muhammad.

I shall like you to send me some more literature on Islam which may enable me to be a true follower of this Great Prophet.

Yours truly,  
T. U. DANIELL.

THE IMAM,  
*The Mosque, Woking.*

DEAR SIR,

Many thanks for your letter and for the literature you enclosed.

I am glad you have asked me to write more fully and to let you know more about my education, the names of countries in which I

OLD SARUM,  
WILTS.

## CORRESPONDENCE

have resided, etc. There are several points on which I would like your instruction and advice, and you will probably appreciate my view point better when you know more about me.

I was born in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa where I spent the first twelve years of my life. Both my parents were born in South Africa of European extraction. I was later sent to Chaplain High School in Gwelo, S. Rhodesia.

I lived for a time with an uncle and assisted him in his work. He had a contract with a railway company, and crushed granite for ballasting the line at so much per cubic yard. It was here that I first became interested in the Muslim religion. Most of the labour for the granite quarry was recruited from the north, outside of Rhodesia. The most conscientious workers came from Nyassaland, and were of the Muslim Faith. Later my uncle secured a contract with the Cam and Mother mine. Thousands of Muslim natives were employed here, and I was impressed by their devoutness at prayers and their good behaviour, and I took the opportunity of studying their faith.

I believe in the five principles of the Faith. I have been led into believing in them, not by intensive study of literature but by logical reasoning. The Church Creed requires me to believe in the Holy Trinity. No priest of the Christian Church admits belief in three gods, and no priest has given me a satisfactory answer as to what the Holy Trinity is; nor has any priest convinced me that the Service of the Holy Sacrement is not a survival of paganism. I ceased attending communion services some years ago.

I do not believe in the literal interpretation of books of religion as do puritans. They were written by men, men who were no doubt inspired, but were nevertheless human like you and me. There have been mistranslations and misunderstandings, and we have to be guided by these works and by our own consciences. I believe in prayer, because one thereby submits one's conscience to God for guidance.

I shall not fill in the form of declaration just yet. I want to practice Islam first. It is one thing to have a theoretical belief in the Faith; another to carry out its requirements. I shall also buy an English translation of the Holy Qur-án, and become a subscriber to the *Islamic Review*.

Please let me know whether you think my beliefs are within the requirements of the Islamic Brotherhood. I am using the English translation of the *Salat*. I shall not attempt to learn Arabic until I am posted overseas—probably to Iraq or Egypt.

Yours very sincerely,

D. B.

AL-HAJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN<sup>1</sup>

The *Islamic Review* for April-May is devoted to tributes to the life and work of the late Kamal-ud-Din, who might well be regarded as the reincarnation of some devoted disciple of Muhammad, so entire was his faith, so unceasing his energy in the cause of Islam. The Khwaja was of distinguished lineage, a highly educated man, and of most humane and philanthropic character. His work was well-nigh worldwide, for he laboured in India, in Africa, and, during his later years, in England, where he founded the Woking Mosque and established the *Islamic Review* in 1932. Many converts were gained by the personal charm and deep faith of the Khwaja, among both Europeans and Americans. Naturally, if regrettably, Christian sects and sectarians ignore, where they do not calumniate and deride the equally sincere and successful missionary efforts of men of other religions than their own. Judging by the *Islamic Review*, during the many years it has been among the exchanges of Theosophy, the tone of the Woking Mission is far nearer the spirit of Christianity than is that of many Christian denominations. Contributions to this memorial number include the names of many distinguished men in all parts of the world. So long as men in their search for their lost spiritual heritage still, for the most part, travel in the path of religion, it is a matter of rejoicing on the part of the Theosophists, to note among all religions and all sects those rare souls whose humanitarianism outweighs, if it does not outlaw, all considerations of race, creed and other barriers to an all-embracing Universal Brotherhood.

<sup>1</sup> "The Theosophy," Los Angeles,

## AL-HAJ KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN

### KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN<sup>1</sup>

*Passing of a Great Oriental Scholar.*

The demise of the Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din in India may not mean much to the majority of people in this country, but nevertheless he was one of the really great men of our time and has won a place in history as an author, a ripe scholar, and an able exponent of his faith.

Born in India in 1870 of a family of poets and scholars, he was a professor and principal of the Islamia College, Lahore, India. He studied law and practiced that profession with great success. He was so well-posted on the Hebrew scriptures that many of his friends considered him a Christian at heart. All at once he gave up the profession of law and established a Muslim mission in England at Woking, near London.

Soon after arriving in England he established the *Islamic Review* which is read in all parts of the world. To show its wide circulation, the writer got his first copy of the *Review* from a Unitarian minister in Sydney, Australia.

The late Khwaja was the author of a number of books all of which show considerable study and deep insight. His study of the Hebrew scriptures stood him in good need, for his knowledge of the original enabled him to point out many mistranslations in our translated scriptures.

His *Sources of Christianity* is probably his best known work. Unlike most critics of Christianity, he did not treat its founder as a myth. He says : "We Muslims accept Jesus as a messenger from God and regard him as entitled to our allegiance, even as our own prophet. From the pedestal of Divinity, to which ignorance and credulity has raised him, he (Jesus) still says : Do not call me good, for there is none good but God."

<sup>1</sup> *Ryan's Weekly, Takom (U. S. A.)*

The birth of all the Sun gods,—Apollo, Bacchus, Hercules, Mithra, Adonis, Attis, Osiris, Horus, Baal, Quetzalcoatl,—were on or about the same date, he points out.

The story of Calvary is found in Babylonian tablets four thousand years old and parallel copies given.

H. W. Wells says that Paul was the real founder of Christianity, but the Khwaja traces Paul's teachings back to Philo of Alexandria who flourished about a century earlier. No doubt but that Paul was well versed in Greek philosophy. We find him quoting Cleanthes the Stoic on Mars Hill.

His book *Towards Islam* demonstrates that Christian Science, Divine Science, New Thought, Spiritualism and Primitive Christianity have much in common with Islam. Islam teaches only the Unity of God, which is the religion of all the Hebrew Prophets and the early church until it became changed.

The writer had the privilege of contributing a few articles to the *Islamic Review* through the courtesy of the late Khwaja, and it is with much regret that we learned of his sudden demise. But as he wrote once to the writer in a time of great bereavement :

“ From God we are and unto God we return.”

The Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din was a firm believer in Divine healing, and was always a great favourite with spiritualist audiences.

Since the first Mosque was built in Woking, England, Islam has established three others in Europe, in London, Paris and Berlin.

JAMES A. SPROULE.

## LIFE AND MISSION OF JESUS

BY MUHAMMAD YAQUB SUFI

When Nietzsche, the latest, if not the last, product of the German philosophical soil, condemned Christianity and pronounced it—on its Gospel merits as existing in his own time—as a religion fit only for the slaves and the ignorant, it were only time and circumstances which saved him from the gallows or persecution, which has been the fate of some of the bolder spirits before him, such as Descartes, Bruno, Kepler, Copernicus, etc., etc., but, true to its traditions, Christianity avenged itself by calling him a mad man, a fanatic with no philosophical touch about him.

If it were time and circumstances that saved Nietzsche from the hands of the infuriated ministers of Christ, it were the same again which vindicated his character as a far-seer, for it is time alone which has forced out the truth from the mouth of its own devotees that Christianity hardly befits the scientific progress of humanity unless we are bold enough to turn back the hand of time for centuries and submit to live as fishermen on some Galilean lake again.

Granting even for a moment that the times when the "son of Mary" lived on this earth were "simple," and "ideas Divine" could not possibly be wrought out and received on philosophical principles and in mathematical exactness, then we have a right to ask for that "simplicity" which should bear with it a divine stamp, which should be applicable and acceptable to all mankind and at all times, for which we look, and look in vain, in the Gospels.

For a book to be guide for "all" it is necessary that it should bear in itself sufficient proof of its own truth and appeal by its very divine message to the conscience of man as a "son of nature."

Starting from the common point of view we take up Christianity first before dealing with the second point. In the first place, the personality of Jesus, as given to us by the Gospels, cannot, when considered with all its sacred seclusion, in which it is set by prepossessed minds or writers writing with a devotional design, help us to form an idea as to whether his mission as a prophet forms an integral part of his teachings. Confronted with this difficulty Rousseau in his *Emile* asks : *Dirons nous que l'histoire de l'Evangile est inventé à plaisir*—“ shall we say that the history of the Evangile is invented to please fancy ? ” Yet he gives up his own case by counterposing the case of Socrates and his less accredited (*moins attestés*) words.

Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* quoted by Milman says : “ While, however, Christianity submitted to all these *modifications* I strongly *protest against* the opinion that the origin of the religion can be attributed, according to the theory adopted by many foreign writers, to the gradual and spontaneous development of the human mind.” (Italics are mine). The words *modifications* and *strongly protest* explain the tenour of the whole argument. One may strongly protest, in Milman’s idea, against a universally admitted fact, when impartially applied in all cases, but not when exclusively applied to other religions, and here I may refer to Dozy’s *Mussulmans de l’Espagne*, volume II, chapter on Christian Martyrs, as a proof how these writers deal with religions other than their own. Here we have Jesus shorn of all the legendary hallow woven round him by interested hands,—whose unchristian power we feel in the pages of secular history throughout Europe and Asia,—as an ordinary lad “ helping his father in his daily vocation.” Grown to manhood he still excites no wonder in us by his conduct except that he “ avoids with a jealous precaution any action or language which might directly commit him with the rulers or the people.”

## LIFE AND MISSION OF JESUS

This "jealous precaution" would have spelt in the case of any ordinary person a characteristic weakness of mind, much more so in the case of a prophet or saint charged with a divine mission.

Another palpable proof of his activity is afforded by the Christian historians at Cana in Galilee at a marriage feast where he "turns water into wine," and, unconsciously perhaps, contributes to the taste of the European world throughout centuries to follow!

We see him next with John the Baptist, where we are told John acknowledges his own inferiority to the "coming" Messiah "whose shoes' latchet he is unworthy to unloose," and, strange to say, does not recognize Jesus in the audience before him, till after the baptism, which was only too natural. Besides, this very John when thrown into prison by Herod Antipas, where he remained for a whole year, commissioned two of his disciples to enquire into the truth of those wonderful reports which reached him of Jesus, as to his claim to Messiahship and to demand of him whether "he was the expected Messiah."

The assertion by the Christian authorities on the one hand that this very John announced the advent of Messiah as close at hand, in fact "pointed him out in the audience as the promised Messiah" and John's commissioning two of his disciples, on the other, to find out the truth of those wonderful reports about him, renders the situation altogether perplexing. Milman noticing it rounds it off, and asks: "Was it for the satisfaction of his own doubts or those of his followers? Was it that in apprehension of his approaching death he would consign his disciples to the care of a still greater instructor?" One wonders at the confusion of the historian, but the one thing that stands out clear in this chaos is that John doubted the Messiahship of Jesus. The truth is that John never believed him (Jesus) to be the Messiah, and was, therefore, perplexed at the reports that

reached him. Those who have studied the history of the Hebrew prophets, even in their sacred writings, know it for a fact that time to them was of no consequence. They took the events, which had to happen centuries after, as a *fait accompli*, and read in this light John's prophecy about the advent of a Messiah wears a different colour and refers to another man altogether.

Moreover, Jesus himself admitted as being not "equal to his time," or in the words of Weiss, the German allegorist, "he reverts, in language of more than usual energy, to the incapacity of the age and nation to discern the real and intrinsic superiority of his religion." What a parody on the wisdom of the "Father in Heaven" to have sent his "son" (prophet) before the requisite time to the latter's utter discomfiture. Was his Messiahship to end in this?

Leave alone the perplexity of John, Jesus himself is perplexed over the situation he had created! Renan referring to the scene at the Synagogue says: "he now frequently changes his place, passes from one side of the table to the other, and even endeavours to throw a temporary concealment over some of his miracles",<sup>1</sup> and in utter desperation enacts the scene of demoniacs among the tombs and the herd of swine in the district of Gadara, and as the fourth scene of the drama "Jesus withdrew into the desert country about Bethsaida with the prudence which he now thought fit to assume, avoiding any sudden collision with the desperation or the capricious violence of the Tetrarch" (Herod).

Was it not the murder of John, the Baptist, that reacted upon Jesus and brought about all this trepidation? Baffled in their visions of the Messiah's earthly power and glory, the disciples now too wavered in their fidelity, and "cast off their unambitious, this inexplicable Leader," and in tone of despair Jesus asked them (the chosen

<sup>1</sup> Vie de Jésus.

## LIFE AND MISSION OF JESUS

twelve) "whether they too would abandon his cause." It may be here remarked that Strauss in his *Leben des Jesu* uses this very act as an argument for the later invention and inconsistency of the Gospels.

Referring to his absence from the Passover, which he assiduously attended for two years previously, St. John says : "after these things Jesus walked into Galilee for he would not walk in Jewry because the Jews *sought to kill him.*" (Italics are mine). This passage requires no comment. We have here the son of man, as given to us by so-called sacred writings, in his true bearings, a Biblical Messiah, anointed of God, taking ordinary precautions to escape death in the cause of his Creator, if not Father !

One may ask whether it was the massacre of some of the Galileans in the temple that made him give up his appointed mission or whether it was the person of Pontus Pilate, a governor "so reckless of human life" that checkmated his Divine career ? These are questions which may well be left to be answered by our Christian erudites. Whatever the interpretation put upon it the general tenour of his conduct has a striking semblance of fear and concealment.

Palestine, Tyre, Sidon, countries to the north of the sea Tiberias, and the confines of Jordan appear to have become the scene of his peregrinations during this period, with the simple object to avoid coming in contact with the "authorities." So much so that his noted benevolence also forsook him as proved in the case of the Canaanite woman who approached him for the cure of her daughter "who was suffering under diabolic possession," and to whose entreaties Jesus turned a deaf ear. In this evidently he followed the view of his disciples who hated the idea that "a stranger should share in the mercies of their Master," and more than once they themselves, embarrassed by the inexplicable, if not contradictory conduct and language of the so-called son of David (Peter's

way of calling him) asked him as to the "common view of his character."

It will not be out of place to say that at one time he thought of making a solicitous appeal to the "rabble"—whom he had already likened to dogs—in order to avoid an ignominious end, but was prevented in view of the high notions which his disciples cherished of his personality.

After extreme precautions to escape the enmity of the Jews he desperately threw aside the veil and confronted the whole Jewry in the Sanhedrin. The attempt was as desperate as it was real, for by thus acting alone he could redeem his character and courageously meet death which he mysteriously hinted as close at hand.

It may be remarked here that throughout these four years of his career and repeated appearances in the Synagogue he never once claimed to have set up a new "Law," in the sense of the term as understood by the learned Jews of his time, but ungrudgingly allowed himself to be judged by the Mosaic Law, which, he said, "he was charged to expound in its true light" (a fact which in its nature will help us a good deal in evaluating the gospels in their present state).

*(To be continued.)*

## WHAT IS ISLAM ?

### WHAT IS ISLAM ?

The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teachings. For further details, please write to the IMAM of the Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.

**ISLAM, THE RELIGION OF PEACE.**—The word Islam literally means: (1) Peace ; (2) the way to achieve peace ; (3) submission; as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

**OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.**—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

**THE PROPHET OF ISLAM.**—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims, *i.e.*, the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's Prophets, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

**THE QUR-ÁN.**—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-án, the last book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

**ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.**—These are seven in number : belief in (1) Allah ; (2) Angels ; (3) Books from God ; (4) Messengers from God ; (5) the Hereafter ; (6) the Premeasurement of good and evil ; (7) Resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress ; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the Hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in Heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state in this life.

The sixth article of faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination ; he believes in Premeasurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

**PILLARS OF ISLAM.**—These are five in number: (1) declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad ; (2) Prayer ; (3) Fasting ; (4) Almsgiving ; (5) Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine at Mecca.

**ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.**—The Muslims worship One God—the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of All the

Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is Indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

**FAITH AND ACTION.**—Faith without action is a dead letter. Faith by itself is insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden, and none can expiate for another's sin.

**ETHICS OF ISLAM.**—“Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes,” says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His Attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine Attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

**CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.**—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels, and leading him to the border of Divinity.

**THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.**—Man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments. Islam places man and woman under the like obligations, the one to the other.

**EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.**—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

**PERSONAL JUDGMENT.**—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

**KNOWLEDGE.**—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

**SANCTITY OF LABOUR.**—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

**CHARITY.**—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.